THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) A request was received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh to establish a Maritime University at Visakhapatnam.

(b) and (c) Government of India is contemplating formation of a Maritime University in India at the earliest. The details including its Location are still being worked out. No time frame, therefore, can be given as of now.

Directions of CAG

516. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the CAG has asked the National Highway Authority of India to speed up the construction of the golden quadrilateral project;

(b) if so, the bottlenecks pointed out by the CAG; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) In its Report No. 7 of 2005 presented to the Parliament on 11 May 2005, the CAG has also commented upon delay in execution of projects on the Golden Quadrilateral.

(b) Some of the highlights of the CAG observations in this regard are:

* There was no corporate plan to implement such a large project.
* Deficient planning and inefficient contract management by the design and project consultants contributed to under performance in achievement of the target.

(c) The actions taken by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)/ Government to expedite implementation of National Highways Development Project (NHDP) are as under:

* A Committee of Secretaries has been constituted to address inter-ministerial and Central States issues such as land acquisition, utility shifting, environment approvals, clearance of road overbridges etc.

* State Government have appointed senior officers as nodal officers for resolving problems associated with implementation of the National Highways Development Project such as land acquisition, removal of utilities, forest/pollution/environment clearances etc.
* Process of issue of land acquisition notifications has been streamlined.
* To expedite the construction of Road overbridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India to coordinate with Railways.
* Learning from the past experiences DPR preparation exercise has been streamlined.
* The bid documents have also been standardized with a view to bringing in uniformity and clarity in bidding and contract administration.
* Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) are being reviewed by experts to ensure that all aspects of the projects are duly covered.
* DPR consultants are asked to incorporate the modifications and changes suggested by the experts.
* Wherever the consultants have been found wanting in performance, deterrent action is taken in the form of warning (for minor omission), suspension of short listing with NHAI and debarment for a prescribed period.

Improvment of National Highways in Jharkhand

517. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of projects for improvement/construction of National Highways in Jharkhand approved since 2000-01, including those for which approval of Central Government has been pending;

(b) the details of length of National Highways undergone augmentation/construction during the period since 2000-01 indicating project cost *vis-a-vis* cost incurred and identity of national Highways in the State;

(c) the current status of the projects which are pending, if any;

(d) the reasons therefor; and